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ABSTRACT

In 1988, a follow-up study was performed of the 1987 graduates of the Dental Hygiene program of William Rainey Harper College (WRHC), in Illinois, in order to determine the quality of the program and the need for changes, and to substantiate the program's goals for accreditation standards. A survey was mailed to all of the 1987 dental hygiene associate degree graduates (N=25), requesting information on their current employment and/or enrollment in school, experiences in finding employment, salary and benefits, tasks performed on the job and quality of their preparation for performing them, level of satisfaction with their chosen profession and their WRHC training, and suggestions for improving the quality of the program. Study findings, based on a 72% response rate, included the following: (1) 16 of the 18 respondents were employed in the dental hygiene field, with 13 working full-time and 3 employed part-time; (2) 56% were working with more than one practitioner; (3) the respondents' search for employment typically involved two job interviews and respondents' personal contacts; (4) almost 70% of the respondents were paid on an hourly basis, with the median salary being $14 an hour and the median daily salary set at $120; (5) among those employed in dental hygiene, 50% were very satisfied with their chosen profession, while 96% were at least satisfied; (6) the respondents generally felt that they were very well prepared in the skill areas which they performed most often; (7) only one 1987 graduate was working toward an advanced degree, although 61% of the respondents intended to do so eventually; and (8) 17 of the 18 respondents indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their professional education. Data tables and the survey instrument are included. (JMC)

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Office of Planning and Research

William Rainey Harper College

Follow-Up Study of 1987 Dental Hygiene Graduates

Volume XVII, No. 2
September 15, 1988

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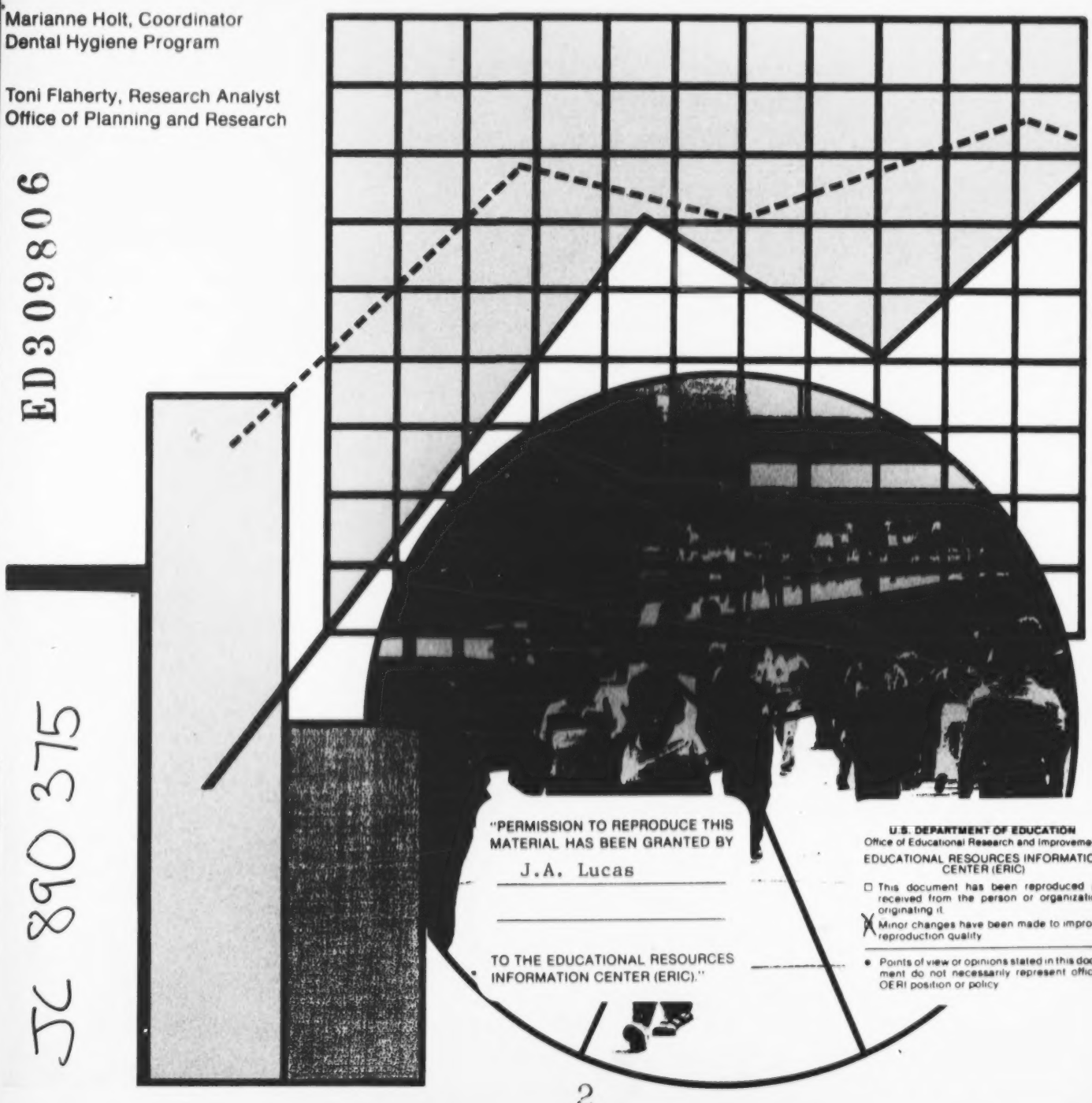

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ABSTRACT

THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY WAS TO FOLLOW UP THE TWENTY-FIVE 1987 DENTAL HYGIENE GRADUATES AS ONE INDICATOR OF THE QUALITY OF THE PROGRAM, THE NEED FOR APPROPRIATE CHANGES AND IN ORDER TO SUBSTANTIATE THE PROGRAM'S GOALS FOR ACCREDITATION STANDARDS. A SURVEY INSTRUMENT WAS MAILED TO THESE GRADUATES AND AFTER SEVERAL FOLLOW-UP EFFORTS, A 72 PERCENT RESPONSE RATE WAS OBTAINED.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY INDICATED THAT ALMOST ALL DENTAL HYGIENE GRADUATES ARE EMPLOYED IN A DENTAL HYGIENE POSITION THEY PREFER. THEY ARE GENERALLY VERY SATISFIED OR AT LEAST SATISFIED WITH THEIR CAREER CHOICE. IN ADDITION, THEIR SALARIES AND BENEFITS CONTINUE TO BE VERY GOOD COMPARED TO OTHER HARPER CAREER GRADUATES. THEY ALSO REPORT LITTLE DIFFICULTY FINDING A JOB. GRADUATES ONCE AGAIN REPORT THEY ARE VERY WELL PREPARED IN THE SKILL AREAS THEY PERFORM MOST OFTEN. WHILE ONLY ONE GRADUATE IS CURRENTLY WORKING TOWARD AN ADVANCED DEGREE, OVER HALF PLAN TO EVENTUALLY WORK TOWARD ONE.

FINALLY, ALMOST ALL DENTAL HYGIENE GRADUATES ARE SATISFIED WITH THEIR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION.

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Purpose

The purpose of this study was to follow up the 1987 Dental Hygiene graduates as one indicator of the quality of the program, the need for appropriate changes and in order to substantiate the program's goals for accreditation standards. The study was requested by the Coordinator of the Dental Hygiene Program.

Population Surveyed and Methodology

The survey instrument shown in the appendix was designed by the Coordinator of the Dental Hygiene Program with input from the Office of Planning and Research. This survey was mailed to all 25 1987 dental hygiene associate degree graduates. After four weeks those not responding were mailed a second copy of the survey. One month later, those still not responding were telephoned and encouraged to complete the survey. With this follow-up effort, 18 completed surveys were obtained for a 72 percent response rate.

Discussion of Results

Among the 18 respondents, 16 are employed in the dental hygiene field. Ten are employed full time in one situation while three more are employed full time with two part-time jobs. Another three are employed part-time by choice. The two who are unemployed are homemakers.

In examining their employment situations, just over one half (56%) are in a setting with more than one practitioner while 31 percent are with a single practitioner. Most (84%) are employed in general practice. The most common situation in their search for employment was to go through two job interviews, although one quarter were hired with just one interview. There were various avenues used in searching for employment but the most frequent means (56%) was personal contact on their own. Another 38 percent used local newspapers and 19 percent used ADHA placement. Other methods were also listed. The local newspaper and IDHA placement were more frequently used by these graduates than in the previous survey.

Almost 70 percent are paid on an hourly salary basis although some receive commissions or bonuses or salary on another type of basis. The median hourly salary is about $14 per hour and the median daily salary is about $120. This latter figure is equivalent to an annual salary of just over $31,000 (36% above starting salaries for 1986 dental Hygiene graduates). This is higher than the average nursing graduate ($21,500) or the average career graduate ($20,000). These dental hygienists also receive a number of benefits of which the most popular are continuing education paid for by the employer, reduced fees for dental work, Christmas bonus, paid holidays (median of 4.5), and paid vacations (1-2 weeks).

Among those employed in dental hygiene, one half are very satisfied with their chosen profession while 96 percent are at least satisfied with their chosen profession. One person expressed partial dissatisfaction with their choice because of the doctor they work for and the AIDS scare.

These graduates were also asked how frequently they performed certain dental hygiene skills and how well they were prepared to perform these skills. The thirteen skills that were performed often by the 1987 graduates are comparable to those listed by the 1986 graduates. Another nine were almost never performed. The other 15 skills were performed occasionally. On 20 of these skills, the dental hygiene graduates felt they were very adequately prepared while on another 13 skills they were a little more than adequately prepared. On the remaining four skills, they felt less than adequately prepared. As in the previous study, the skill areas in which graduates reported they were the least prepared were also the skill areas they seldom performed.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS (continued)

As for continuing their education, only one 1987 graduate is working toward an advanced degree in pre-dentistry. However, 61 percent anticipate to eventually work toward an advanced degree. Almost 70 percent of the graduates have maintained membership in the IDHA/ADHA and one half participated in formalized continuing education presentations. When asked how satisfied they were with their professional education, 17 said they were satisfied or very satisfied. Only one expressed dissatisfaction because they felt favoritism was shown to a selective amount of students.

MAJOR CONCLUSIONS

Almost all dental hygiene graduates are employed in a dental hygiene position they prefer. They are generally very satisfied or at least satisfied with their career choice. In addition, their salaries and benefits continue to be very good compared to other Harper career graduates. They also report little difficulty finding a job. Graduates once again report they are very well prepared in the skill areas they perform most often. While only one graduate is currently working toward an advanced degree, over half plan to eventually work toward one. Finally, almost all dental hygiene graduates are satisfied with their professional education.

FOLLOW-UP SURVEY OF DENTAL HYGIENE GRADUATES OF 1987

Current Employment Situation

Situation	1987 N	1987 PCT
Employed full time as dental hygienist	10	55.5
Employed in two part-time jobs as a dental hygienist equaling full-time employment in hours worked	3	16.7
Employed as a part-time dental hygienist, by choice	3	16.7
Unemployed because of being a homemaker	2	11.1
Total	18	100.0

Employment Situation

Practice Setting		
Solo practitioner	5	31.2
More than one practitioner	9	56.3
Clinic type	2	12.5
Total	16	100.0

Type of Practice		
General Practice	13.5	84.4
Perio	2.5	15.6
Pedo	0	0
Total	16	100.0

Number of Jobs Interviewed for in Employment Search

One	4	26.6
Two	5	33.3
Three	3	20.0
Five	1	6.7
Eight	1	6.7
Ten	1	6.7
Total	15	100.0

Median Number of Interviews - 2

How Salary is Determined	N	PCT of 16 Respondents
Hourly Salary	11	68.7
Commission	2.5	15.6
Bonus in addition to salary	2	12.5
Weekly Salary	1	6.2
Monthly Salary	1	6.2
Daily Salary	1	6.2
Independent Contracting	.5	3.1

Average Daily Salary

Amount	N	PCT
$104	1	9.1
$110	1	9.1
$112	2	18.2
$114	1	9.1
$120	2	18.2
$128	1	9.1
$145	1	9.1
$150	1	9.1
$165	1	9.1
	11	100.0

Median Daily Salary - $120
Equivalent to an annual salary of $31,200

Hourly Salary

Amount	N	PCT
$13.00	1	8.3
$13.00*	1	8.3
$13.50	2	16.7
$14.00	3	25.0
$14.25	1	8.3
$15.00	1	8.3
$16.00	2	16.7
Commission	1	8.3
	12	100.0

* - Plus Bonus
Median Hourly Salary - $14

Workweek - Hours Per Week

	N	PCT
9	1	6.25
20	1	6.25
30	1	6.25
32	3	18.8
35-40	1	6.25
36	1	6.25
37	1	6.25
38	1	6.25
40	2	12.5
43	1	6.25
45	1	6.25
46	1	6.25
50	1	6.25
Total	16	100.0

Median Hours Per Week - 36.5

Number of Offices

	N	PCT
One	6	50.0
Two	4.5	37.5
Three	1.5	12.5
Total	12	100.0

Avenues Used to Find Employment Situation	N	PCT of 16
Personal Contact	9	56.3
Local Newspaper	6	37.5
IDHA Placement	3	18.8
Private Placement Agency	2	12.5
School	1	6.3
Friend	1	6.3
Past Employer	1	6.3

One person reported difficulty in getting compatible hours when working part time for two offices.

Goal During Employment Search	N	PCT
Full-time work in one office (more than 30 hours/week)	11.5	71.9
Part-time work in more than 1 office to equal full-time	1	6.3
Part-time employment (less than 30 hours/week)	3	18.7
No Saturday hours	.5	3.1
Total	16	100.0

Satisfaction with Chosen Profession		
Very Satisfied	9	50.0
Satisfied	8.33	46.4
It is OK	.33	1.8
Dissatisfied	.33	1.8

Why dissatisfied? - Changes from day to day. A lot has to do with the doctor you work for and the AIDS scare.

Total	17.99	100.0

Benefits Included in Work Situation	N	PCT of 16
Continuing Education Courses Paid	12	75.0
Reduced Fee for Dental Work	12	75.0
Christmas Bonus	11	68.7
Paid Holidays - Median 4.5 Days	9	56.2
Paid Vacation - Average 2 Weeks	9	56.2
Pension Plan	5	31.2
Paid Sick Days - varies between 3 and 12 days	5	31.2
Uniform Allowance	4	25.0
Bonus for Production Increase	3	18.7
Major Medical	4	25.0
Malpractice Insurance	3	18.7
Profit Sharing	2	12.5
Life Insurance	2	12.5
Paid Trips to Out-of-State Dental Conventions	1	6.2
Dr. Pays Employee for Unused Major Medical Benefits	1	6.2

Advanced Education/Professional Development

Working toward an advanced degree	N	PCT
Yes - Pre-Dental; Pima College, Arizona	1	5.6
No	17	94.4

Anticipate to eventually work toward advanced degree		
Yes	11	61.1
No	7	38.9

Major Area of Study - Business
Possibly Practice Management
Public Health or Business Administration
Dental Research
Did not specify - 3

Professional Development	N	PCT of 16
Maintained membership in IDHA/ADHA	11	68.7
Participated in formalized continuing education presentations	8	50.0
Volunteered for community projects or activities	4	25.0
Attend local IDHA component meetings	3	18.7

Satisfaction with Professional Education

	N	PCT
Very Satisfied	9	50.0
Satisfied	8	44.4
Dissatisfied - Expressed favoritism shown to a selective amount of students. Students abilities were prejudged by clinical instructor making it difficult for students to prove themselves.	1	5.6
Total	18	100.0

Frequency of Performing Various Dental Hygiene Duties

Duty	N	Frequency Index 2 = Often 1 = Occasionally 0 = Never
Hand Scaling	15	2.00
Patient Education - Individual	14	2.00
Radiographs - Interproximal Survey	15	1.93
Medical History of Patient	15	1.87
Ultrasonic Scaling	15	1.87
Polishing - All Patients	15	1.87
Periodontal Evaluation - Probings	15	1.80
Periodontal Scaling	15	1.80
Radiographs - Perapicals	15	1.80
Radiographs - Complete Intra-oral Survey	15	1.73
Intra/Extra Oral Exam	15	1.60
Root Planning	15	1.60
Topical Fluoride Applications	15	1.60
Sealants	15	1.40
Dentition Charting	15	1.33
Complete Charting	13	1.31
Subgingival Irrigation	13	1.31
Curettage	13	1.23
Blood Pressure/Pulse Screening	15	1.00
Indices - Gingival	14	.93
Air Polishing	14	.93
Radiographs - Panorex	15	.93
Indices - Periodontal	10	.90
Impressions for Study Models	15	.87
Nutrition Counseling	15	.80
Indices - Bleeding	13	.77
Indices - Plaque	11	.73
Suture Removal	15	.60
Polishing Analgrams	15	.47
Patient Education - Group	12	.42
Perio Pack Removal	15	.40
Selective Polishings	13	.38
Radiographs - Occlusal	15	.33
Margination (EVA)	15	.27
Vitality Testing	15	.27
Orthodontic Placement and Removal	15	.07
Rubber-Dam Clamp Placement	15	.07

Other radiographs listed: Cephlographic and X-ray
Pedodontic X-ray
Verticle BWX

Adequacy of Preparation for Various Dental Hygiene Skills

Duty	N	Adequacy Index 2 = Very Well Prepared 1 = Adequately Prepared 0 = Inadequately Prepared
Patient Education - Individual	13	2.00
Radiographs - Interproximal Survey	15	2.00
Radiographs - Complete Intra-oral Survey	15	2.00
Radiographs - Perapicals	15	2.00
Hand Scaling	15	1.93
Periodontal Scaling	15	1.93
Polishing - All Patients	13	1.92
Medical History of Patients	15	1.87
Intra/Extra Oral Exam	15	1.87
Periodontal Evaluation - Probings	15	1.87
Dentition Charting	15	1.87
Ultrasonic Scaling	15	1.80
Topical Fluoride Applications	14	1.79
Subgingival Irrigation	13	1.77
Periodontal Evaluation - Complete Charting	13	1.77
Blood Pressure/Pulse Screening	15	1.73
Air Polishing	13	1.69
Root Planning	15	1.67
Margination (EVA)	15	1.60
Patient Education - Group	12	1.58
Impressions for Study Models	14	1.50
Sealants	14	1.50
Curettage	15	1.47
Selective Polishings	12	1.33
Suture Removal	14	1.29
Nutrition Counseling	15	1.27
Indices - Gingival	13	1.23
Indices - Periodontal	13	1.23
Indices - Plaque	12	1.17
Indices - Bleeding	14	1.14
Polishing Analgrams	15	1.13
Vitality Testing	15	1.13
Radiographs - Panorex	14	1.07
Perio Pack Removal	14	1.00
Radiographs - Occlusal	14	.86
Rubber-Dam Clamp Placement	14	.36
Orthodontic Placement and Removal	13	.31

General Comments

- It would be nice to know how others answered this questionnaire.

- Dropped membership in IDHA/ADHA due to financial reasons and do not attend local IDHA component meetings because they are on nights when I make the most money.

- I am very pleased that Harper stressed the hygienist as a "periodontal-co-therapist". It has made my work much more rewarding.

- Keep stressing perio and patient relationships.

A P P E N D I X

- Survey Instrument with Cover Letter

William Rainey Harper College
Algonquin and Roselle Roads
Palatine, Illinois 60067
312 397-3000

Dear Class of 1987,

Greetings from Harper's Dental Hygiene Program!

By now you have been working in your new profession for nearly a year, and we are anxious for you to share with us your thoughts about our program and your dental hygiene education.

We are especially interested in how you found your employment, how you like your chosen profession, are you continuing your professional growth, and how well do you feel we prepared you.

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey and return it in the envelope provided. The survey results will help us to grow, develop and improve our program.

Our second Alumni Association meeting was a huge success. I am very encouraged about your interest and support. You will be hearing more about the Alumni Association in the weeks to come.

Please keep in touch and continue to let us know how you are doing. We especially enjoy talking with our recent graduates.

Very truly yours,

Marianne P. Holt

Marianne P. Holt, R.D.H., M.A.
Coordinator
Dental Hygiene Program

MH/od

W I L L I A M R A I N E Y H A R P E R C O L L E G E

DENTAL HYGIENE PROGRAM

SURVEY

1- Check (✓) your current employment situation

_____ A. Employed full time as a dental hygienist
_____ B. Employed in two part-time jobs as a dental hygienist equaling full-time employment in hours worked
_____ C. Employed as a part-time dental hygienist, by choice
_____ D. Employed as a part-time dental hygienist but would prefer full-time employment
_____ E. Employed outside the dental hygiene field by choice

Job Title_____

Why did you prefer this?_____

_____

_____ F. Employed outside the dental hygiene field but would prefer working as a dental hygienist

Present Job Title_____

_____ G. Unemployed but searching for employment
_____ H. Unemployed because am enrolled in college

Major_____ College_____

_____ I. Unemployed because of being a homemaker
_____ J. Unemployed for some other reason

2- Practice Setting:
_____ A. Solo Practitioner
_____ B. More than one practitioner
_____ C. Clinic Type
_____ D. Other_____

_____

3- Type of Practice:
_____ A. General Practice
_____ B. Perio
_____ C. Pedo
_____ D. Other_____

_____

4- _____ A. Number of work hours/week

_____ B. Number of Offices

5- What avenues did you use to find your employment situation(s)? Check (✓) all that apply.

_____ A. Personal Contact
_____ B. ADA Placement
_____ C. ADHA Placement
_____ D. Private Placement Agency
_____ E. Major City Newspaper
_____ F. Local Newspaper
_____ G. Other_____

_____

_____

(Over)

6- If you had difficulty finding employment, what type of difficulty?_____

_____

_____

_____

7- During my employment search, I was looking for:

_____ A. full-time work in one office (more than 30 hours)
_____ B. Part-time work in more than one office to equal a full-time work week.
_____ C. Part-time employment (less than 30 hours/week)
_____ D. Other - Specify_____

_____

8- How many jobs did you interview for?_____

9- How is your salary determined? Please (✓) check all that apply.

_____ A. Hourly salary
_____ B. Weekly salary
_____ C. Monthly salary
_____ D. Commission
_____ E. Salary and Commission
_____ F. Bonus and one of the aforementioned
_____ G. Independent contracting
_____ H. Other - Specify_____

_____

10- What is your average daily salary (based on an 8-hour day)?_____

11- What is your hourly salary?_____

12- What benefits are included in your work situation? Check (✓) all those that apply.

_____ A. Paid Holidays - How many?_____
_____ B. Paid Sick Days - How many?_____
_____ C. Pension Plan
_____ D. Profit Sharing
_____ E. Paid Vacation - How Much?_____
_____ F. Insurance:
1) Major Medical_____
2) Life_____
3) Disability_____
4) Liability_____
5) Malpractice_____

_____ G. Other:
1) Uniform Allowance_____
2) Continuing Education Courses Paid_____
3) Paid dues for Assocation_____
4) Reduced Fee for Dental Work_____
5) Bonus for Production Increase_____
6) Christmas Bonus_____

_____ H. Other - Please explain, especially if you are an independent contractor:

_____

_____

_____ I. No Benefits

13- Look over the following job duties and indicate which ones you perform and how well prepared you feel in each area. Check (✓) one in each section.

Dental Hygienist Duty	Often Perform This Duty	Occasionally Perform This Duty	Never Perform This Duty	Feel Very Well Prepared in This Area	Feel Adequately Prepared in This Area	Feel Inadequately Prepared in This Area
A- Medical History of Patient						
B- Intra/Extra Oral Exam						
C- Blood Pressure/Pulse Screening						
D- Periodontal Evaluation						
1- Probings						
2- Complete Charting						
E- Indices						
1- Bleeding						
2- Plaque						
3- Gingival						
4- Periodontal						
5- Other (Specify) _____						
F- Ultrasonic Scaling						
G- Hand Scaling						
H- Periodontal Scaling						
I- Root Planning						
J- Curettage						
K- Polishing - All Patients						
L- Selective Polishings						
M- Air Polishing						
N- Subgingival Irrigation						
O- Patient Education						
1- Individual						
2- Group						
P- Topical Fluoride Applications						
Q- Nutrition Counseling						
R- Margination (EVA)						
S- Polishing Analgams						
T- Impressions for Study Models						
U- Vitality Testing						
V- Dentition Charting						
W- Sealants						
X- Orthodontic placement and removal						
Y- Rubber-dam clamp placement						

(continued on next page)

13- Continued
Check (✓) one in each section.

Dental Hygienist Duty	Often Perform This Duty	Occasionally Perform This Duty	Never Perform This Duty	Feel Very Well Prepared in This Area	Feel Adequately Prepared in This Area	Feel Inadequately Prepared in This Area
Z- Suture Removal						
AA- Perio Pack Removal						
BB- Radiographs						
1- Interproximal Survey						
2- Complete Intraoral Survey						
3- Panorex						
4- Perapicals						
5- Occlusal						
6- Other (Please Specify)						
_____						
_____						
_____						

14- Check (✓) the degree of satisfaction with your chosen profession.

_____ A. Very satisfied
_____ B. Satisfied
_____ C. It is OK
_____ D. Dissatisfied - Why?_____

_____

15- Are you working toward an advanced degree?

_____ A. Yes -- Major area of study_____

College_____

_____ B. No

16- Do you anticipate that you will eventually work toward an advanced degree?

_____ A. Yes -- Major area of study_____
_____ B. No --- Please explain_____

_____

17- With regard to professional development, please check (✓) all that apply.

_____ A. Maintained membership in IDHA/ADHA
_____ B. Attend local IDHA component meetings
_____ C. Participate in formalized continuing education presentations
_____ D. Volunteered for community projects or activities

18- To what degree were you satisfied with your professional education?

_____ A. Very satisfied
_____ B. Satisfied
_____ C. Somewhat satisfied
_____ D. Dissatisfied
_____ E. Very dissatisfied

Please comment on your satisfaction/dissatisfaction. _____

_____

_____

19- Please comment on how we can improve the quality of our program._____

_____

_____ _____

Please correct your mailing address, if necessary

_____

_____

_____

Please supply address of employer (optional)

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU for all your help in responding to this survey!

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges SEP 15 1989